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Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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S E C R E T JERUSALEM 1316

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS, XF
SUBJ: PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL FUTURE

REF: AMMAN 6061; JERUSALEM 1278

SUMMARY: IMAGINATIVE AND VIGOROUS JORDANIAN EFFORTS WILL BE NEEDED TO WIN PALESTINIAN ACCEPTANCE FOR REPRESENTATION AND LATER RULE BY HASHEMITES. AMMAN'S 6061 RAISES DOUBTS WHETHER GOI HAS THIS CAPABILITY. SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATED BY HUSSEIN ASSOCIATING WEST BANK WITH JORDAN IS DESIRABLE. US SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, BE IN POSITION OF ATTEMPTING TO FORCE (POSSIBLY UNSUCCESSFULLY) UNPOPULAR MONARCHY ON UNWILLING PEOPLE AGAINST GROWING MOVEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT PALESTINE. WE SHOULD URGE JORDANIANS TO MAKE NECESSARY MOVES, AND IF THEY DO NOT WE SHOULD BE RESERVED ON QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION FOR TIME BEING. END SUMMARY.

1. AMMAN'S 6061 IS WORRYING. EFFORTS BEING MADE WITHIN GOJ SEEM TO INDICATE AN INABILITY TO RECOGNIZE NATURE AND SERIOUS-NESS OF THE PROBLEM IT FACES IN MOVING, AGAINST CONSIDERABLE ODDS, TO REPRESENT PALESTINIANS. AMMAN'S COMMENT ABOUT LIMITED TOLERANCE FOR PALESTINIANS WHO WOULD BE CONSIDERED REPRESENTA-
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TIVE ALSO RAISES REAL QUESTION WHETHER JORDANIANS WOULD BE ABLE SUCCESSFULLY TO GOVERN RAPIDLY MODERNIZING PALESTINIAN SOCIETY.

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2. I STILL BELIEVE WEST BANK ASSOCIATED IN SOME WAY WITH JORDAN, IN A SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATED BY HUSSEIN, WOULD BE BEST SOLUTION FROM US POINT OF VIEW. THIS ASSUMES THAT KING WOULD BE ABLE TO WIN AT LEAST MINIMUM LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE FROM PALESTINIANS TO GIVE VALIDITY TO SETTLEMENT AND TO PROVIDE REASONABLE ASSURANCE OF ORDERLY GOVERNMENT THEREAFTER.

3. WHAT WOULD NOT BE IN US INTEREST WOULD BE TO WIND UP APPEARING TO FORCE AN INEFFECTUAL AND UNPOPULAR MONARCHY ON AN UNWILLING PEOPLE, WHILE SOVIETS, OTHER ARAB STATES, AND CONSIDERABLE MAJORITY OF PALESTINIANS SUPPORT A NATIONAL REGIME OF SOME SORT. THIS IS NOT JUST A MATTER OF ABSTRACT JUSTICE; WE MIGHT WELL NOT SUCCEED IN DOING SO AND, EVEN IF WE DID, RESULTING SETTLEMENT MIGHT NOT HOLD TOGETHER FOR LONG.

4. I BELIEVE EVEN MORE STRONGLY, THEREFORE, THAT WE SHOULD BE FRANK IN EXPLAINING TO JORDANIANS THAT SUCCESSFUL PURSUIT OF THEIR CLAIM TO WEST BANK REQUIRES VIGOROUS AND FAIRLY RADICAL EFFORTS ON THEIR PART. THEY SHOULD NOT BE MISLED BY PARADE OF PRO-HASHEMITE VISITORS FROM WEST BANK INTO ASSUMPTION THAT JORDANIANS ARE POPULAR AMONG WEST BANKERS. WE DOUBT THAT GIMMICKS SUCH AS HANDPICKED DELEGATION TO ADVISE JORDANIANS IN NEGOTIATIONS WILL HAVE MUCH EFFECT. WEST BANKERS, AND A FORTIORI PALESTINIANS ELSEWHERE, WILL NEED TO BE ASSURED THAT PALESTINIAN INTEREST WILL BE GENUINELY REPRESENTED IN NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT PALESTINIAN PORTION OF FUTURE STATE WILL HAVE HIGH DEGREE OF SECURE AUTONOMY, I.E. NOT READILY WITHDRAWABLE BY HUSSEIN AT LATER DATE.

5. IF GOJ CANNOT MANAGE THIS, I THINK WE SHOULD BE RESERVED ON WHOLE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION. AS SITUATION DEVELOPS, ISRAEL MAY WELL STIFF-ARM ANY PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATING PARTNER, PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS MAY PROVE UNABLE TO GET TOGETHER, ETC. HUSSEIN MAY PROVE TO BE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO CONTINUED OCCUPATION. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE CAN BE HELPFUL IN SECURING REASONABLE, VIABLE SETTLEMENT WITHOUT IT APPEARING TO HAVE BEEN THE US THAT FORCED HUSSEIN ON PALESTINIANS.
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6. I FEAR WE DO NOT SEE MUCH HOPE IN PLEBISCITE IDEA SUGGESTED BY AMMAN (REFTEL), THOUGH IT SOMETIMES MENTIONED ALSO BY WEST BANKERS. BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT FOR PLEBISCITE TO MAKE ANY SENSE, INDEED FOR IT TO BE SAFE TO USE, MAJOR PARTIES CONCERNED WOULD HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT ANY OUTCOME. ON POLITICALLY UNSOPHISTICATED WEST BANK PLEBISCITE WOULD TEND TO BE A WISH-VOTE, AND WE SUSPECT MAJORITY FOR INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN

STATE WOULD BE LARGE. IN CAMPS OF SYRIA AND LEBANON IT WOULD SURELY BE OVERWHELMING. THERE IS FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESS IN ANY PROPOSAL WHICH SEEKS TO POSTPONE DECISION ABOUT WEST BANK FUTURE: ISRAELIS CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO RELINQUISH CONTROL UNLESS THEY KNOW PRECISELY WHAT WILL REPLACE THEM. IT IS HARD

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TO EXCAPE CONCLUSION THAT DISPOSITION OF WEST BANK MUST BE
DETERMINED IN CONTEXT OF SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL.

7. IN SHORT, WE BELIEVE THERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH RELATIVELY
STABLE JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN STATE CAN EMERGE FROM SETTLEMENT,
BUT IT WILL REQUIRE GOOD DEAL OF VIGOR AND IMAGINATION IN AMMAN
TO BRING IT OFF.
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